



INTERCOM

Customer Service Trends Report 2024



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AI is revolutionizing customer service at an unprecedented pace

2023 was the year customer service changed forever.

The arrival of modern, generative AI is as significant as the birth of the internet. It's set to disrupt all industries – and customer service has already been radically redefined. But are support teams ready to shift their mindset and seize this huge opportunity?

We've just scratched the surface of this major transformation, but things are moving at lightning speed. Just think of the difference between this year and last – 12 months ago, AI was only an emerging possibility, and our AI bot Fin merely a glint in our developers' eyes. Now, it's responded to over 2 million customer requests, and counting. We have a front-row seat to the AI revolution, and it's clear now is the time to take action. Those who don't risk getting left behind.

Every year, we survey thousands of customer service professionals to keep a pulse on how the landscape is shifting. For our fourth annual *Customer Service Trends Report*, we specifically wanted to understand the effects, challenges, and opportunities of this disruption on the customer service space.



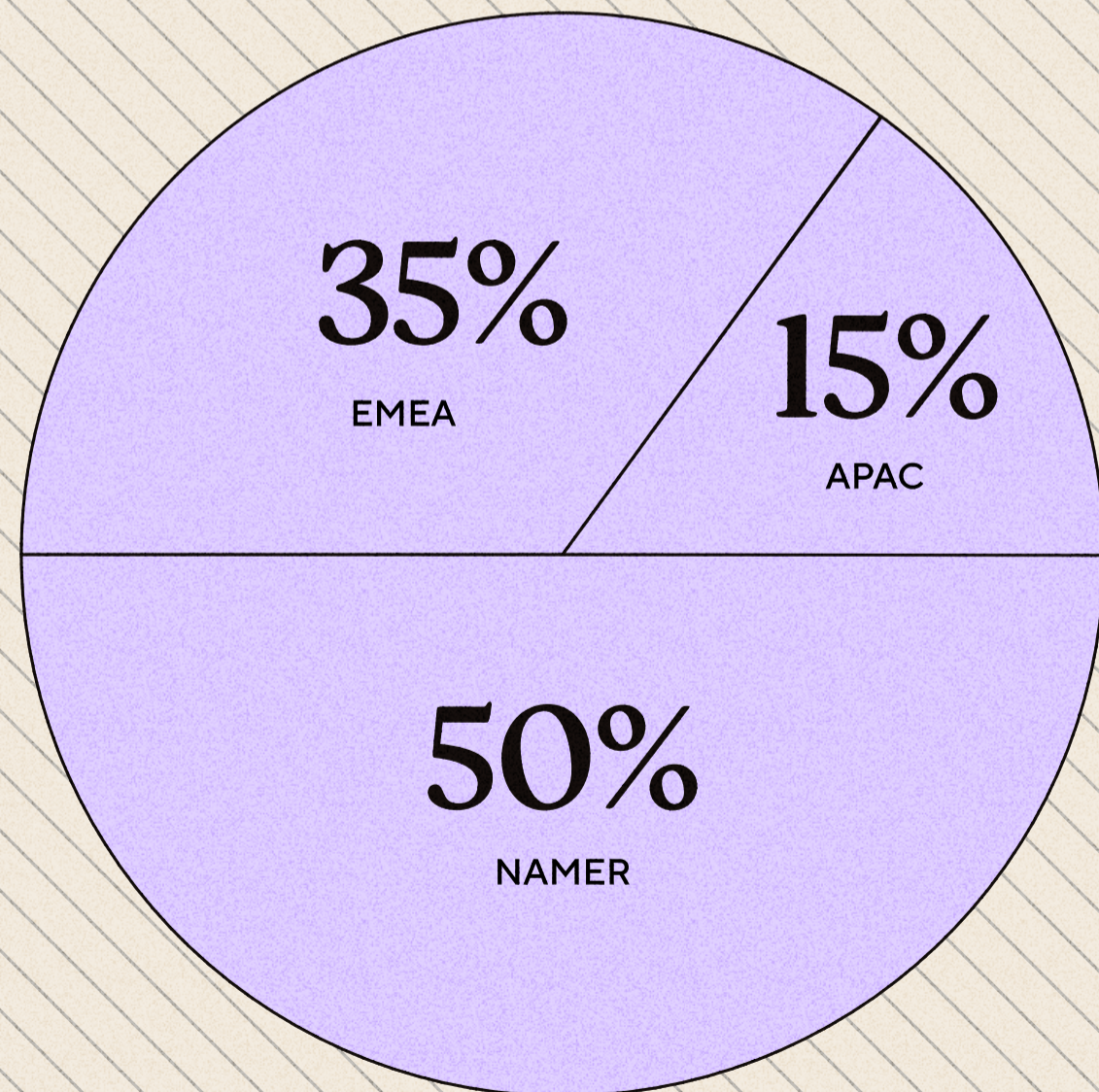
Declan Ivory

VP of Customer Support at Intercom

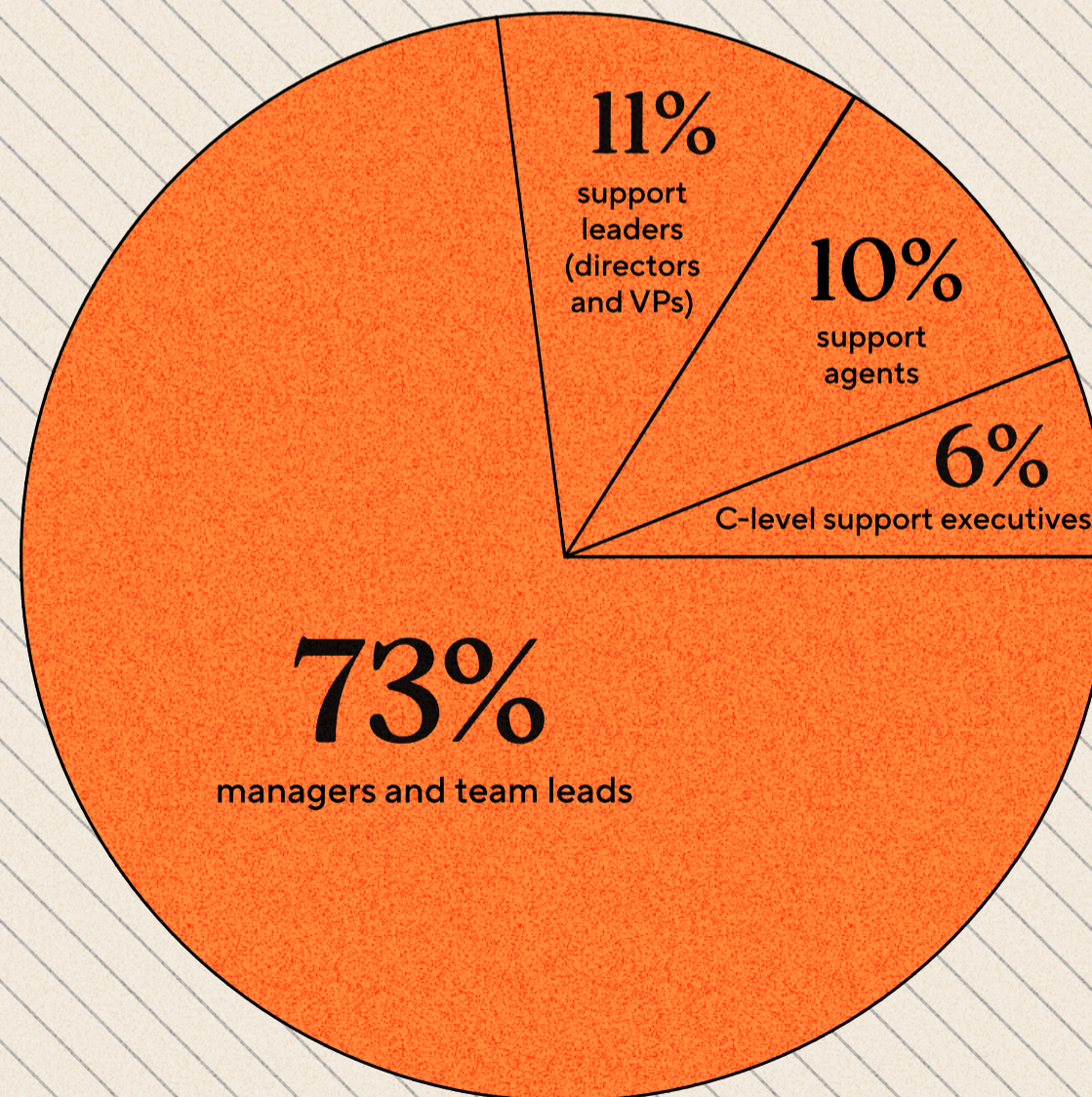
We surveyed over 2,000 global support professionals from a range of locations, roles, and company sizes* to find out how customer service is changing across five main themes: customer expectations, AI trends, support teams, tech stacks, and metrics.

* Intercom commissioned an independent research firm to survey 2,004 customer support professionals about how customer support teams are preparing for ground-shaking changes and new capabilities. The margin of error for this study is 2.2% at the 95% confidence level.

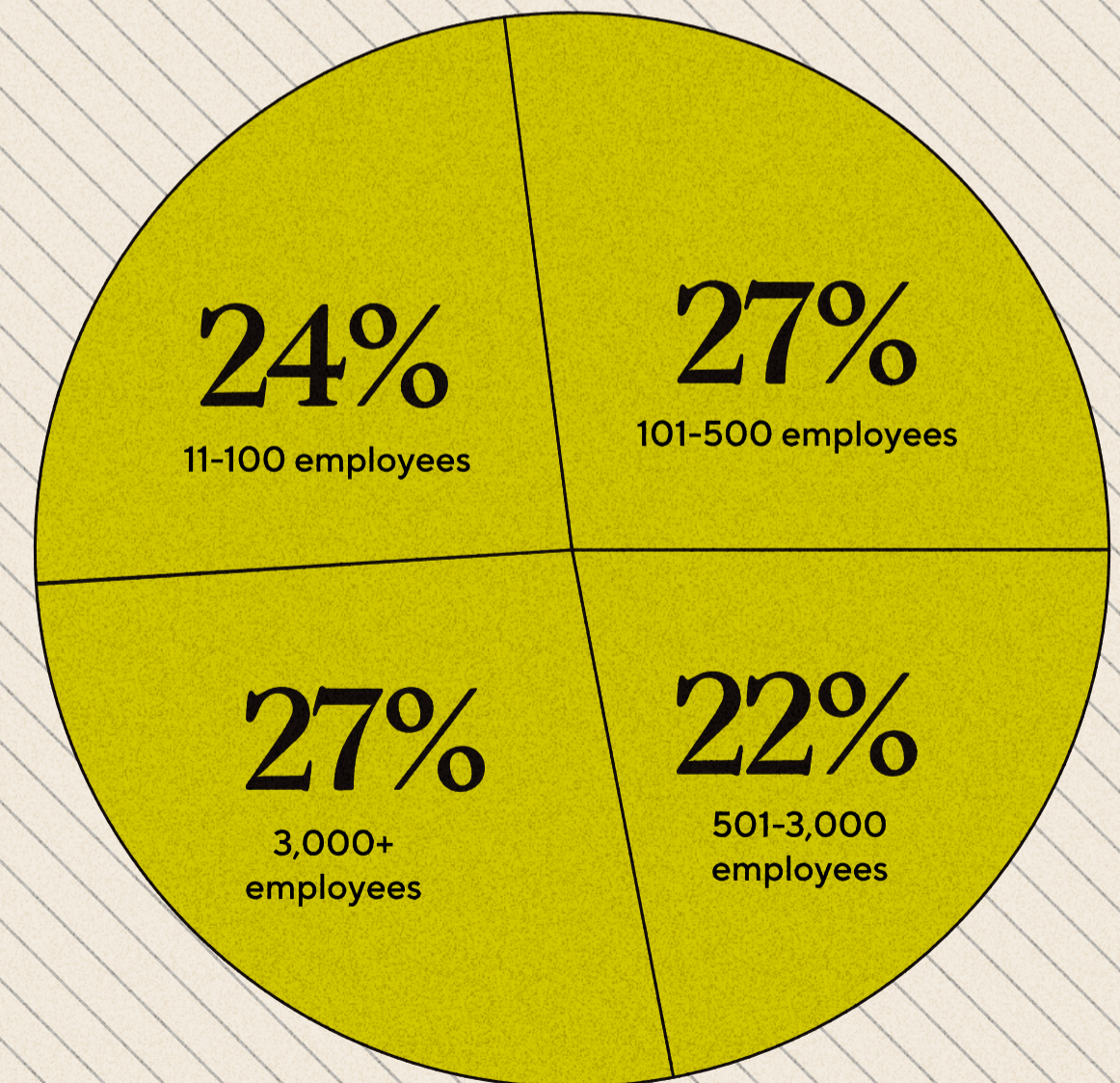
Breakdown of survey respondents by location, role, and company size



Location



Role



Company size

Trends at a glance

- 1 AI has already influenced customer expectations, and they're higher than ever.** Now that customers know how AI can improve their service experience – making it faster and more efficient – they're unwilling to wait around for anything less.
- 2 AI adoption jumped in 2023 – and shows no sign of slowing.** Almost half of customer support teams are currently using AI, and the results speak for themselves. These teams have the advantage – but there's still time for the other 55% of teams to catch up, if they work fast.
- 3 AI is coming for support jobs, but only the monotonous, repetitive parts.** AI is changing the nature of support work and creating exciting new career opportunities for humans. But, there's a perception gap between leaders and their teams when it comes to role evolution, which needs to be addressed in order to get support reps fully bought in.
- 4 Support teams are being held back by tools that were built for the past, and they're reevaluating their tech stacks.** Last-generation technology isn't going to cut it in this new age of customer service, which is why 65% of C-level support execs are looking at new tools specifically as a result of AI.
- 5 Success looks different in an AI-first world, and the ways of measuring it are changing.** Old metrics won't help you meet new opportunities, so support teams need to rethink how they measure and report on core metrics and KPIs to get a true measure of value and success.

Throughout this report, we share our findings as well as practical advice to help you and your team turn these insights into action. No matter your role, you'll walk away with a deeper understanding of how AI is changing the game, what other leaders and teams are doing about it, and simple ways to get started (or level up).

As our research shows, the possibilities are incredible, and the support teams ready to embrace this innovation will come out on top.

My advice to support leaders who haven't already adopted AI would be to move fast. Don't lose out on the opportunity – it's there for the taking (for now).

Time to get moving.

–Declan Ivory, VP of Customer Support at Intercom

Who you are

C-level support executive

**Support leader
(VP or director)**

Manager or team lead

Support agent

What you care about

Creating bold, innovative customer service strategies that elevate your business.

Bringing the strategic vision to life using technology and processes to be as efficient and cost-effective as possible.

Delivering the best possible customer service experience within headcount and budget limitations – and without burning out your support reps.

Impressing customers with fast, efficient support interactions while growing your career in an evolving landscape.

What you'll learn

Future-ready insights and trends to help you get – and stay – ahead of the competition and delight your customers (and your CEO).

Actionable ways AI can help you to improve the quality of your customer service and reach operational excellence, with business-wide results.

The best ways to support and engage your customers and your team, using a winning combination of AI, technology, and workflow optimizations.

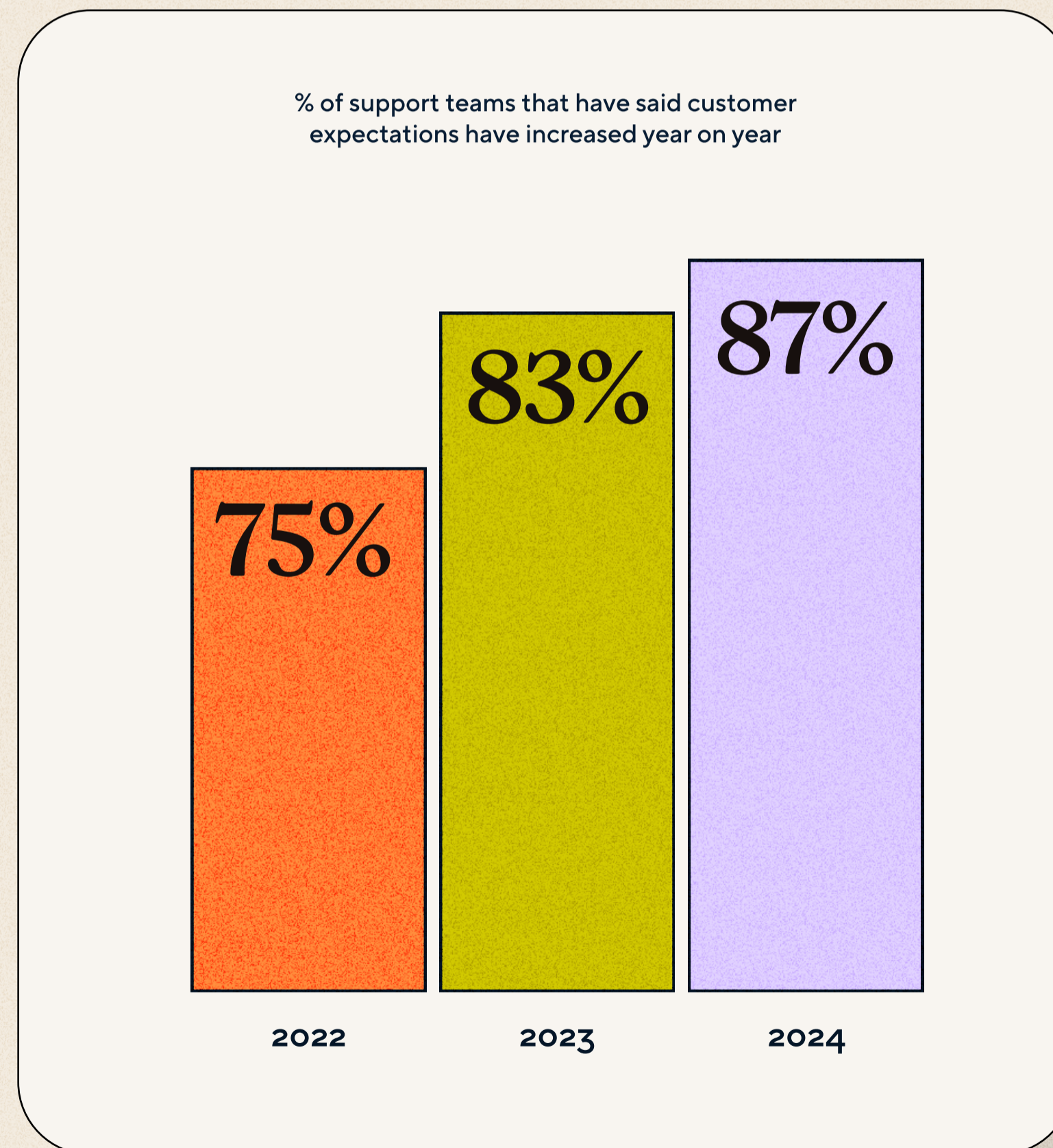
How AI can enhance your day-to-day, free up more time to focus on impactful tasks, and unlock new job opportunities.

Trend 01

Aim high or say goodbye:
Customers' expectations are higher than ever – and they won't settle for less

Expectations are higher than ever

A whopping 87% of support teams say customer service expectations have increased in the past year.

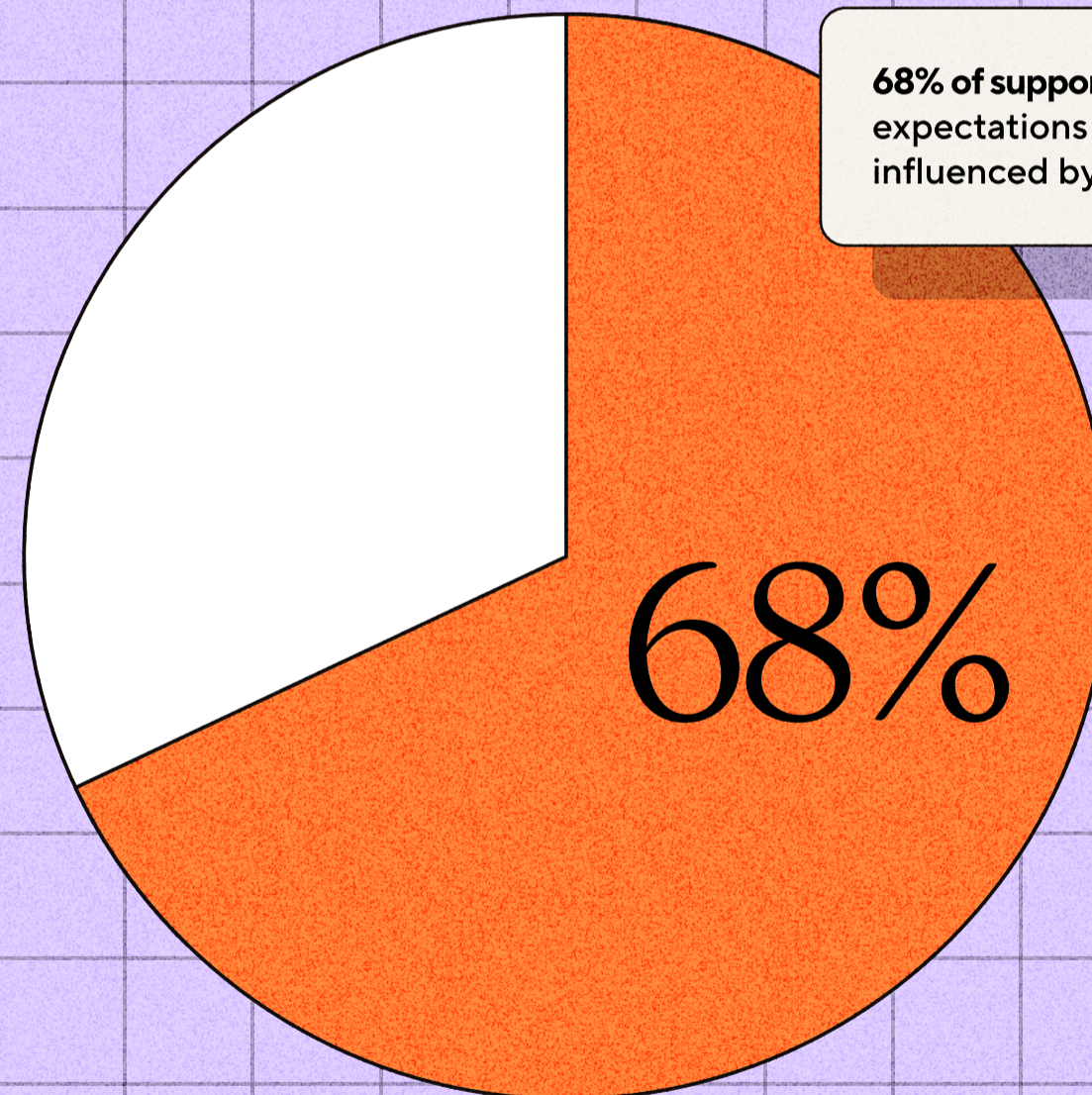


Our research has consistently shown that customer expectations are always on the rise. This year, over two-thirds (68%) of support teams say that customer expectations have been directly influenced by AI, particularly when it comes to key metrics like response times.

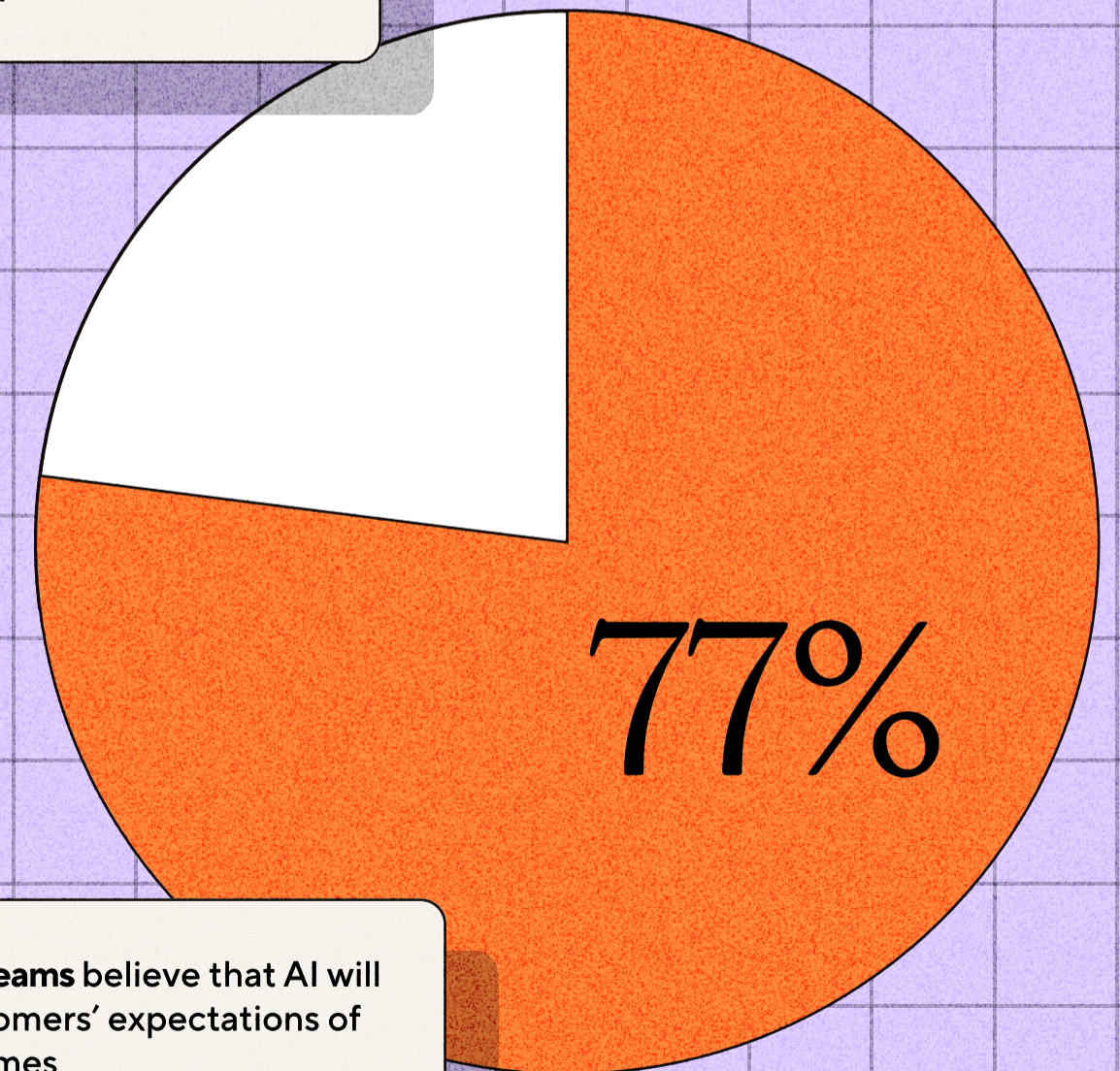
AI has already influenced customer expectations

This means that AI is already reshaping how customers interact with companies – and there are business-wide implications for the teams that can (and can't) meet these elevated expectations.

As every customer-centric team knows, meeting customer expectations isn't just a nice-to-have. It's crucial to staying competitive and keeping customers happy, meaning it has a direct impact on three major business Rs: reputation, retention, and revenue.



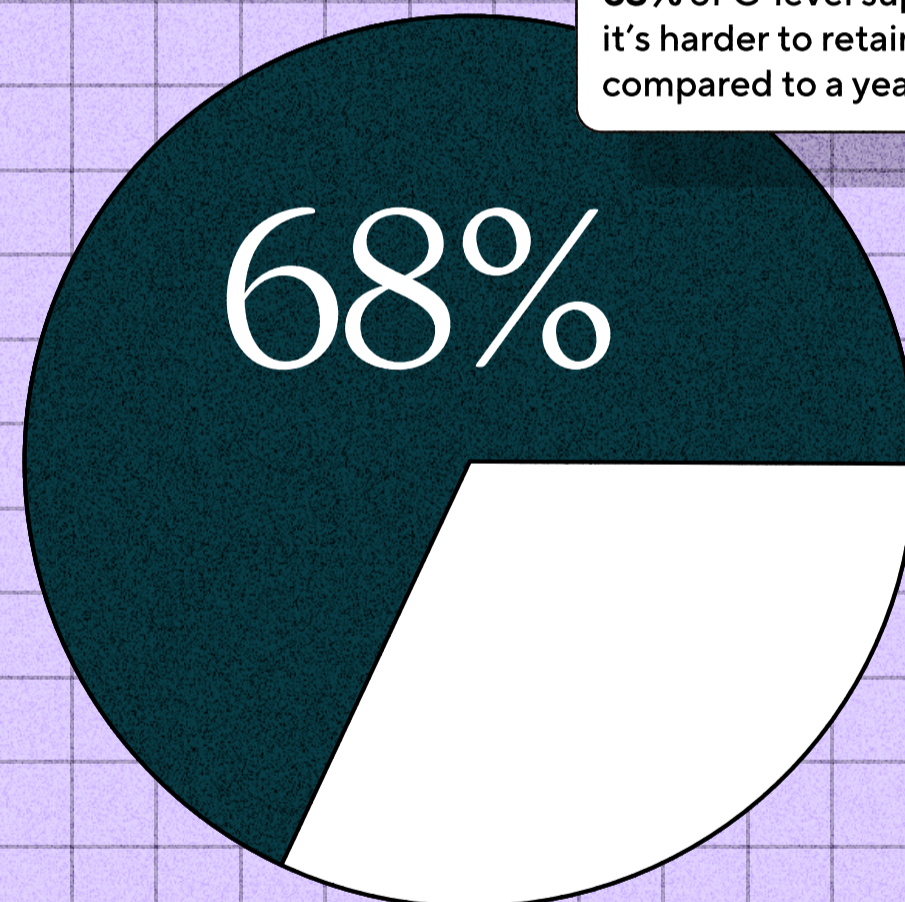
68% of support teams say customer expectations have been directly influenced by AI



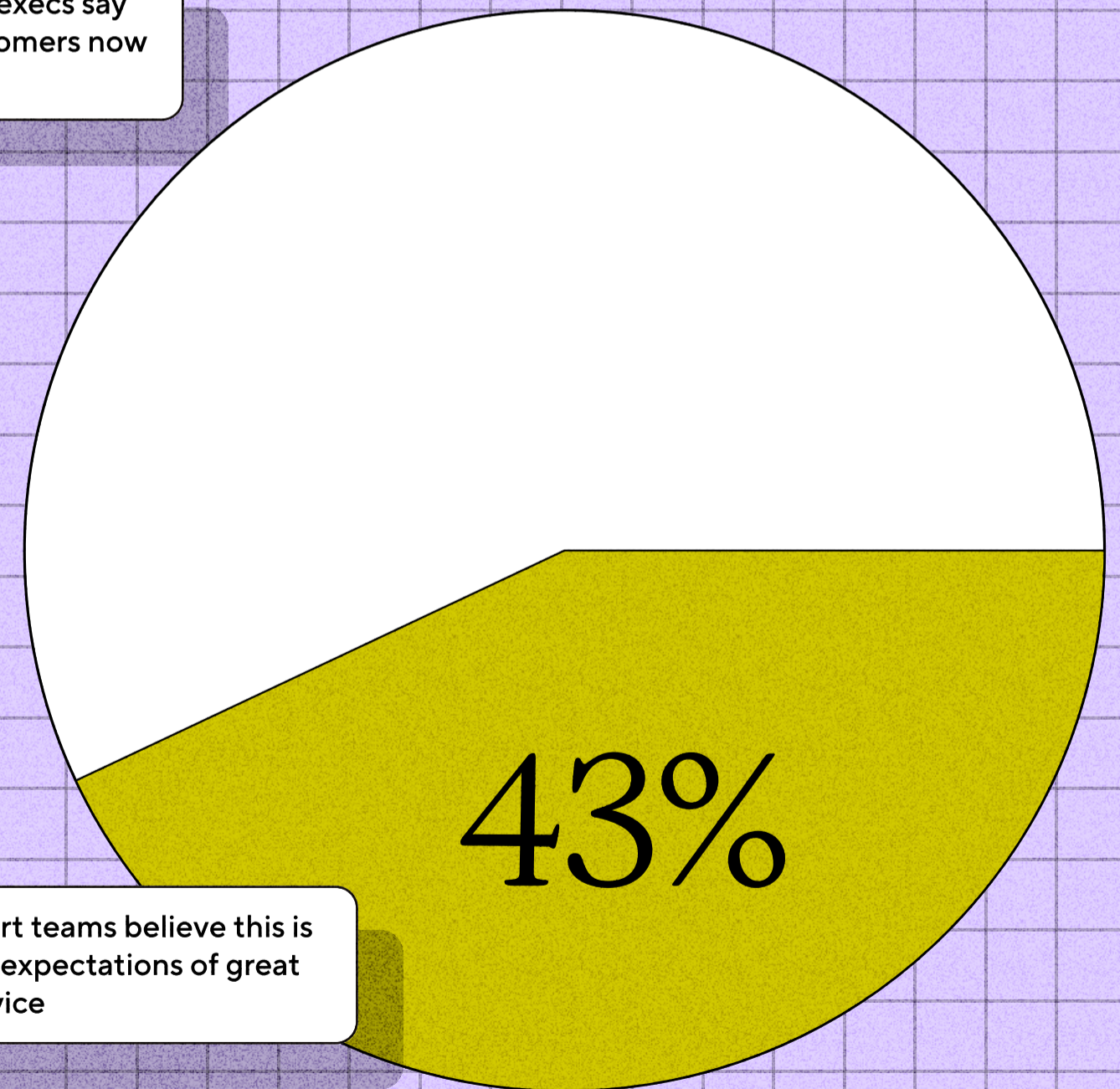
77% of support teams believe that AI will accelerate customers' expectations of fast response times

Retention is getting tougher – and higher customer expectations could be the cause

Our survey also revealed that customer retention is getting harder than ever. Over two-thirds of C-level support executives say it's harder to retain customers now compared to a year ago, and almost half of support teams think that this is due to higher expectations of great customer service. After all, today's consumers aren't willing to settle for less than they deserve – and if you're not providing excellent, AI-driven customer support, your competitors probably are.



68% of C-level support execs say it's harder to retain customers now compared to a year ago



43% of support teams believe this is due to higher expectations of great customer service

Support teams have seen an increase in expectations in a number of areas. It's probably no surprise that today's AI-influenced customers expect faster responses, faster resolutions, and more availability, but they still want expert-level answers and a human (or human-ish) touch.

The top areas where support teams have seen the biggest increase in customer expectations

Speed of response

63%

Speed of resolution

57%

Knowledge and expertise

49%

Availability

49%

Politeness and empathy

43%

How support teams are meeting increased expectations

To meet these evolving needs and keep customers happy, support teams are helping customers in seamless, proactive ways, by meeting them in their channels of choice and preempting issues with targeted messages that prevent them from needing to contact support in the first place.

But for customer-obsessed teams that want to ace every one of those increased customer expectations, it's time to adopt AI-assisted ways of working.

53%



Helping customers in context when and where they need help most

52%



Providing fast, on-demand support

48%



Proactively answering customers' questions, e.g. via targeted outbound messages

“In a recent poll of new customers, we found that 61% preferred to opt for the faster responses of AI vs waiting to speak with a customer support agent.”

Pierre-Camille Hamana
CEO and Founder of Hospitable

⚡ Take action

Map out the best pathway to meet customer expectations using the right combination of AI and human support

Knowing what your customers want is only the first step – next you have to strategically plan how to deliver it.

AI has transformed customer expectations, but the future of customer service is human *and* AI. By using both together, you can maximize your resources, free up support reps' time for high-impact work, and leverage all of the skills and technologies at your disposal.

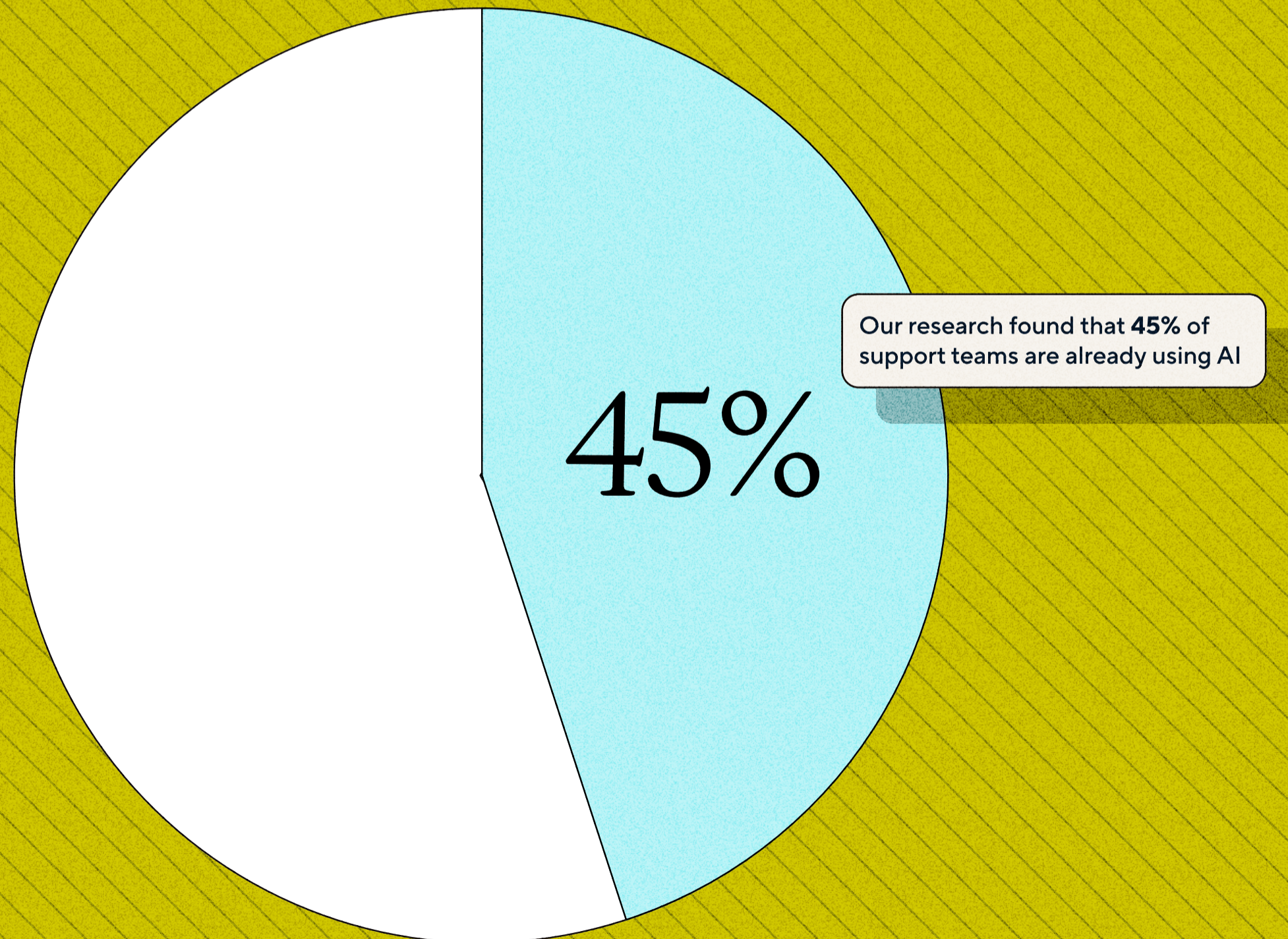
Here's a handy guide to help you smash every category.

Expectation	AI	Human	Explanation
Speed of response	●—●	●	Your AI chatbot provides instant, always-on responses, so customers don't need to wait in a queue to resolve simple and repetitive questions – and it can start triaging the more complicated ones, too, so no customer is left hanging.
Speed of resolution	●—●	●	Combining the power of your AI chatbot with the power of your human support team gives you greater capacity to work on – and solve – significantly more customer problems at once.
Knowledge and expertise	●	●—●	Simple questions are resolved with the knowledge at your AI bot's disposal (like your help center), while more complex issues are routed to your human support team for the kind of troubleshooting they excel at.
Availability	●—●	●	24/7 AI chatbot availability takes care of the easy-to-resolve stuff, freeing up support reps to jump on high-impact queries ASAP.
Politeness and empathy	●	●—●	AI chatbots are plenty polite. But for sensitive or emotionally charged queries – like billing problems – your human support team provides the irreplaceable human touch.

Trend 02

The AI race is on:
Almost half of customer support teams have already adopted AI, with more planning to invest in 2024

Almost half of support teams are already using AI



The top benefits support teams see from using AI

24/7 support availability

Time savings

Fast and efficient resolution of customer issues

50%

45%

44%

Cost efficiency

Customer feedback analysis

Increased quality and consistency across support

35%

35%

35%

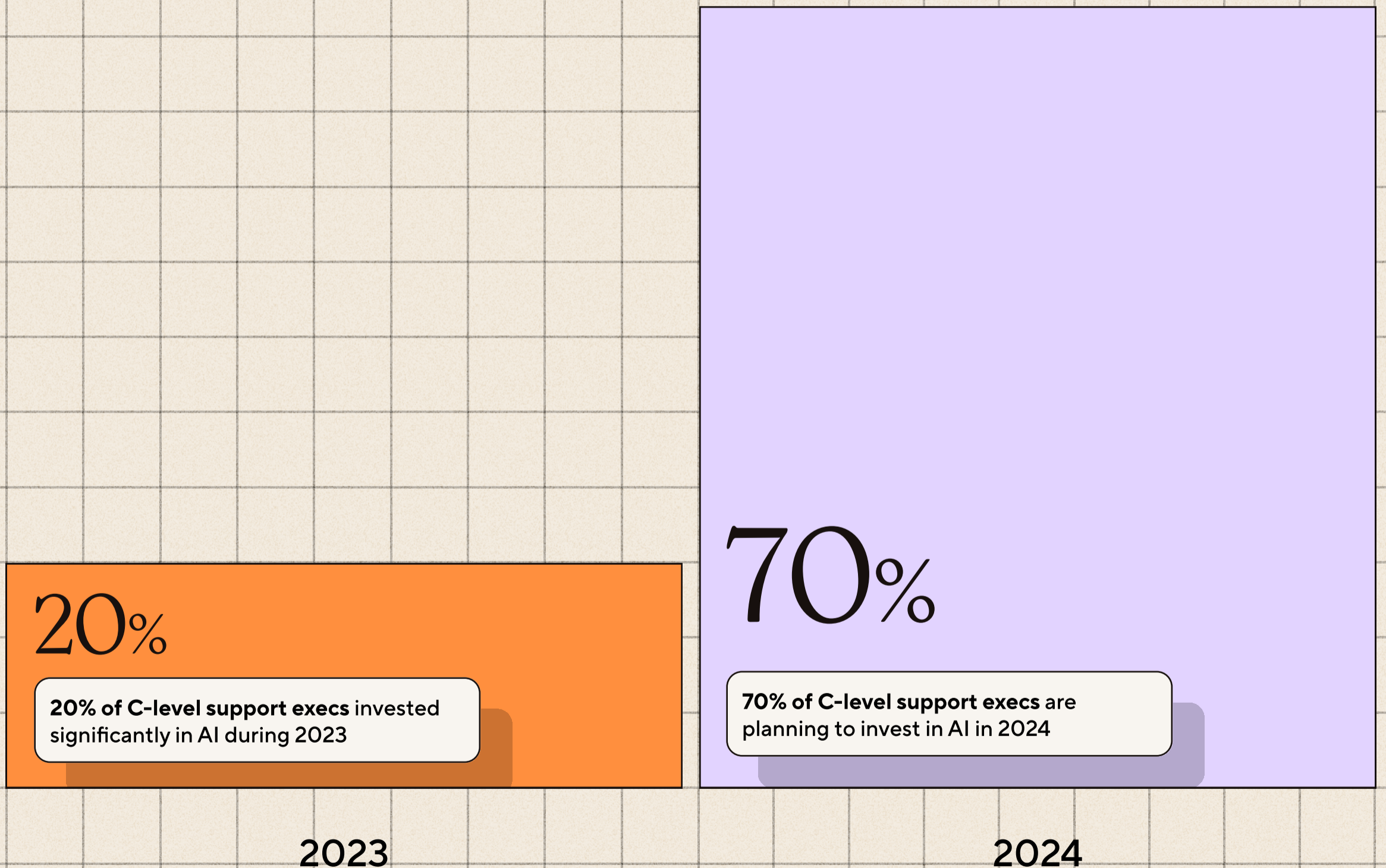
The biggest and best benefits these teams are seeing include always-on support availability, team-wide time savings, and increased efficiency for their customers (as well as internal efficiency gains). They also report that AI enables them to perform customer feedback analysis and increase quality and consistency across their support, setting them up to solve problems tomorrow, not just today.

You might spot a pattern: all of those benefits are good for customers, support teams, and businesses, making AI a win-win-win.

Of the teams that have already adopted it, most report that **11-30% of their support volume is currently being resolved by AI**. That's potentially a third of their support volume, instantly handled – winning back time for their support reps to work on trickier queries.

C-level support execs tested the waters with AI over the last year – and are diving in head first in 2024

AI investment is on the rise: 20% of C-level support execs invested significantly in AI during 2023, and this trajectory is set to trend upwards next year. Almost three-quarters (70%) of C-level support execs say they're planning to invest in AI in 2024.



Across all cohorts, the top areas support teams are planning to invest in are chatbots and the behind-the-scenes infrastructure that strengthens them (like analysis and help center enhancement). Meanwhile, forward-thinking C-level execs also have their eye on voice and speech recognition and real-time language translation capabilities, which will allow them to expand to more channels and markets. To free up budget for this investment in AI, over a third of support execs and leaders plan to decrease focus on – and reduce budget for – *non-AI* technology or tools. Out with the old, in with the new.

The top areas where support teams are planning to invest in 2024

Chatbots

44%

Customer behavior analysis

42%

Knowledge base enhancement

29%

“The people who move fast will shape the customer service philosophies and strategies that get embedded in these tools that are being iterated on daily.”

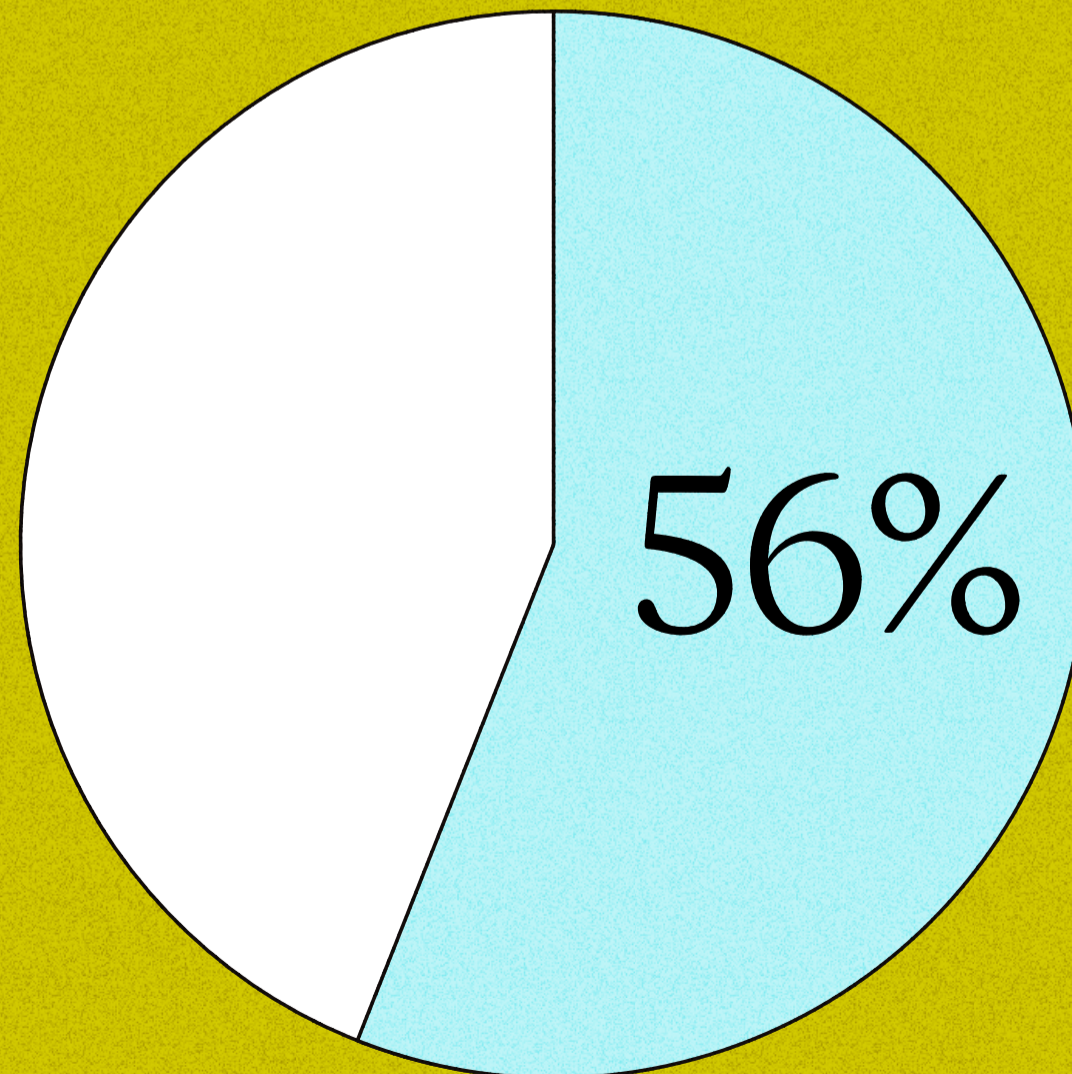
Daniel Bunton

Head of Customer Support at Cleo AI

As AI becomes more prevalent, we're seeing that sentiment around it is changing, too – and leaders and teams are getting excited.

More than half of support teams report that they're more optimistic about AI compared to a year ago, suggesting they've seen the true potential of what AI can do for their customer service efforts.

Support teams are more optimistic that AI could enhance the success of their team



Compared to a year ago, **56% of support teams** are more optimistic that AI could enhance the success of their team

There's an "optimism gap" between execs and agents

While 61% of C-level support execs are more optimistic that AI could enhance the success of their team than a year ago, only 45% of support agents have a similar view

61%
C-level execs

45%
support agents

16 pt gap

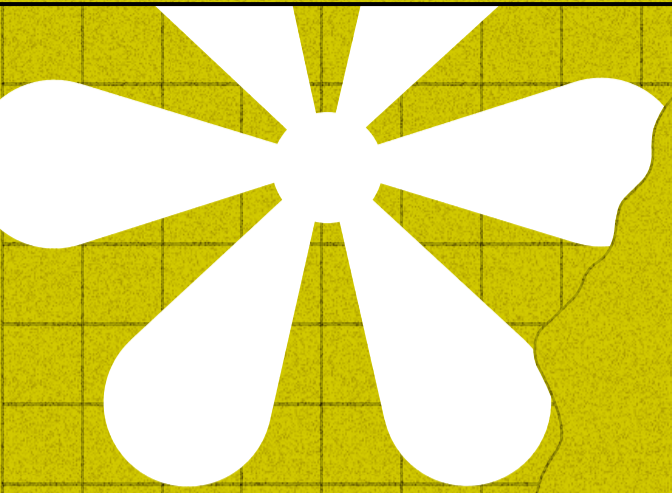
But when we break this down by role, there's still an "optimism gap" between execs and agents.

With so much focus on AI chatbots, it's possible that agents don't yet know the full extent of how much there is to be excited about, other than their new digital colleague. Don't forget to communicate – and take full advantage of – the other myriad ways a fully AI-powered customer service solution will make every day easier, more efficient, and more enjoyable for your support reps.

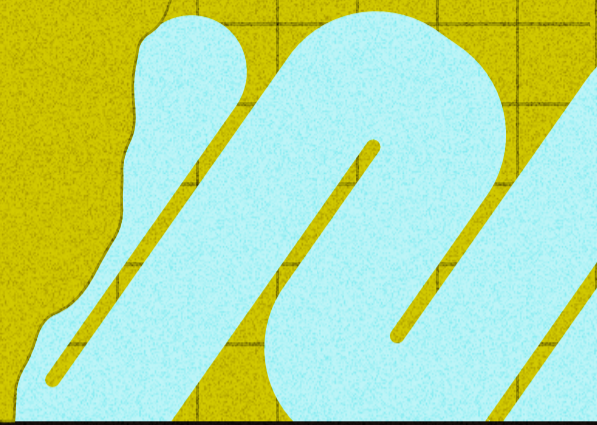
 Micro-trend

Size matters

Of the four company sizes we surveyed, those with between 101–3,000 employees are more optimistic about AI, have adopted it at a higher rate, and are planning to invest in it more significantly than other cohorts next year.

Take action

3 ways to save time and enhance efficiency with AI and automation



1

Resolve and triage problems with AI chatbots.

Reduce your inbound volume with an AI bot that can instantly resolve a chunk of your customer queries using your existing support content. Leading AI chatbots have built-in safeguards to ensure that answers are accurate and on-brand, and can seamlessly pass more complex conversations to your human support team – after gathering some initial information to help them hit the ground running.

2

Save time on every response with AI-powered inbox features.

Modern customer service platforms enable you to view and manage all of your support channels (like email, live chat, phone, WhatsApp, and social) from one inbox, and are enriched with AI so you can:

- Quickly compose replies, expand on bullet points, rephrase your message, or adjust the tone.
- Instantly summarize entire customer conversations for detailed, contextualized handovers between agents.
- Understand team performance at a glance with real-time dashboards.

3

Build automated workflows to enhance personalization at scale.

With the right tools in your toolkit, you can create powerful, personalized customer journeys using visual automation builders. These builders enable you to combine bots, triggers, conditions, and rules to create efficient pathways and connect with your customers wherever they are. You can also enrich your conversations with customer data, like order history, to make your responses even more relevant.

Trend 03

Real talk:
AI is coming for support jobs –
but not in the way you think

The top areas where AI is saving support teams time

Customer service has always been challenging.

It's fast-paced, high-stakes, and – let's be honest – occasionally kinda frustrating.

AI can alleviate many of the pressures that support teams face and free up their time to focus on more value-adding activities. And while it isn't actually *taking* support reps' jobs, it is set to shift what those jobs look like – for the better.

Like we say, the future of customer service is both humans and AI working together.

Our survey revealed that support teams are already reaping the rewards of a human-AI partnership. In addition to saving time on every answer with features like expanding, rephrasing, and adjusting the tone of responses, AI also helps teams analyze customer feedback to spot broader trends, enabling them to be more proactive and customer-centric.

Analyzing customer feedback

35%

Suggesting answers from knowledge base content

34%

Expanding notes or bullet points into full answers to customer questions

28%

Summarizing customer conversations

25%

“AI makes support teams happier because it reduces the number of queries they have to handle, making their workload far more manageable. This means they can spend less time putting out fires and more time making customers’ lives better, which is far more rewarding.”

James Laurie

CX Operations Specialist at Up Learn

The top challenges for support teams according to C-level support execs

Our research shows that heading into 2024, the top challenge for C-level support execs is attracting and keeping high-quality reps, closely followed by increasing efficiency. The two are ranked almost equally, because you can't have one without the other. *Great people + great systems = happy employees empowered to do their best work.*

Attracting and retaining quality staff

40%

Increasing workflow/operational efficiency

39%

Managing conversation or call volume

32%

Helping the organization retain or grow the customer base

25%

Unsurprisingly, the main customer service priority for C-level support executives in 2024 is also one of their biggest challenges: **increasing workflow efficiency**. Other priorities – like enabling customers to self-serve and automating support with chatbots – also contribute to this goal, improving efficiency for teams and customers alike.

Fine-tuning these areas will be crucial for providing the kind of fast, effective customer service that keeps customers coming back for more – which is another of C-level execs’ top priorities for the year ahead.

The main customer service priorities for C-level support execs in 2024

Increasing workflow efficiency

47%

Empowering customers to self-serve answers to their own questions

40%

Helping the organization retain or grow the customer base

34%

Automated support with chatbots

30%

Support leaders believe these new roles will be added to their team in the next five years

We also found that AI is driving the creation of new types of support roles, many of which have strategic elements, like chatbot analyst and conversational UX mapper. With AI on hand to help with the logistics and practicalities – like resolving repetitive queries, drafting responses, creating new help content, and capturing more customer data to work with – there’s greater potential for reps to make a real impact on the customer experience and grow their careers in fulfilling new ways.

Chatbot analyst

42%

Conversational UX mapper

32%

AI customer support specialist

29%

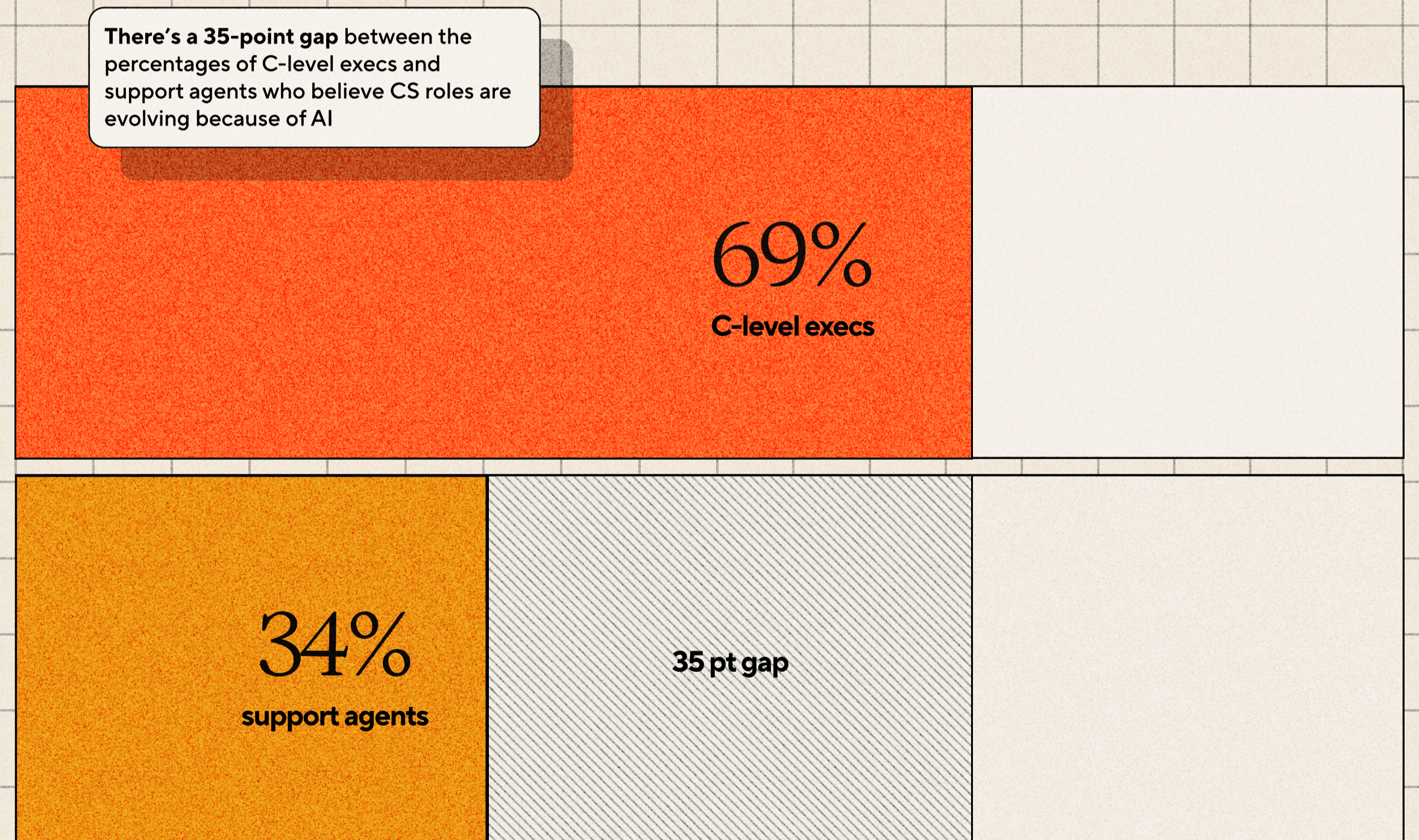
Conversation designer

26%

Support roles are evolving because of AI – but there’s a perception gap between execs and agents

Almost half (49%) of support teams believe that customer service roles on their team are evolving because of AI. But there’s a significant perception gap between leadership and agents here: the majority (69%) of C-level support execs believe that roles are evolving, compared to only 34% of support agents. In fact, 43% of support agents said that they think roles *aren't* evolving.

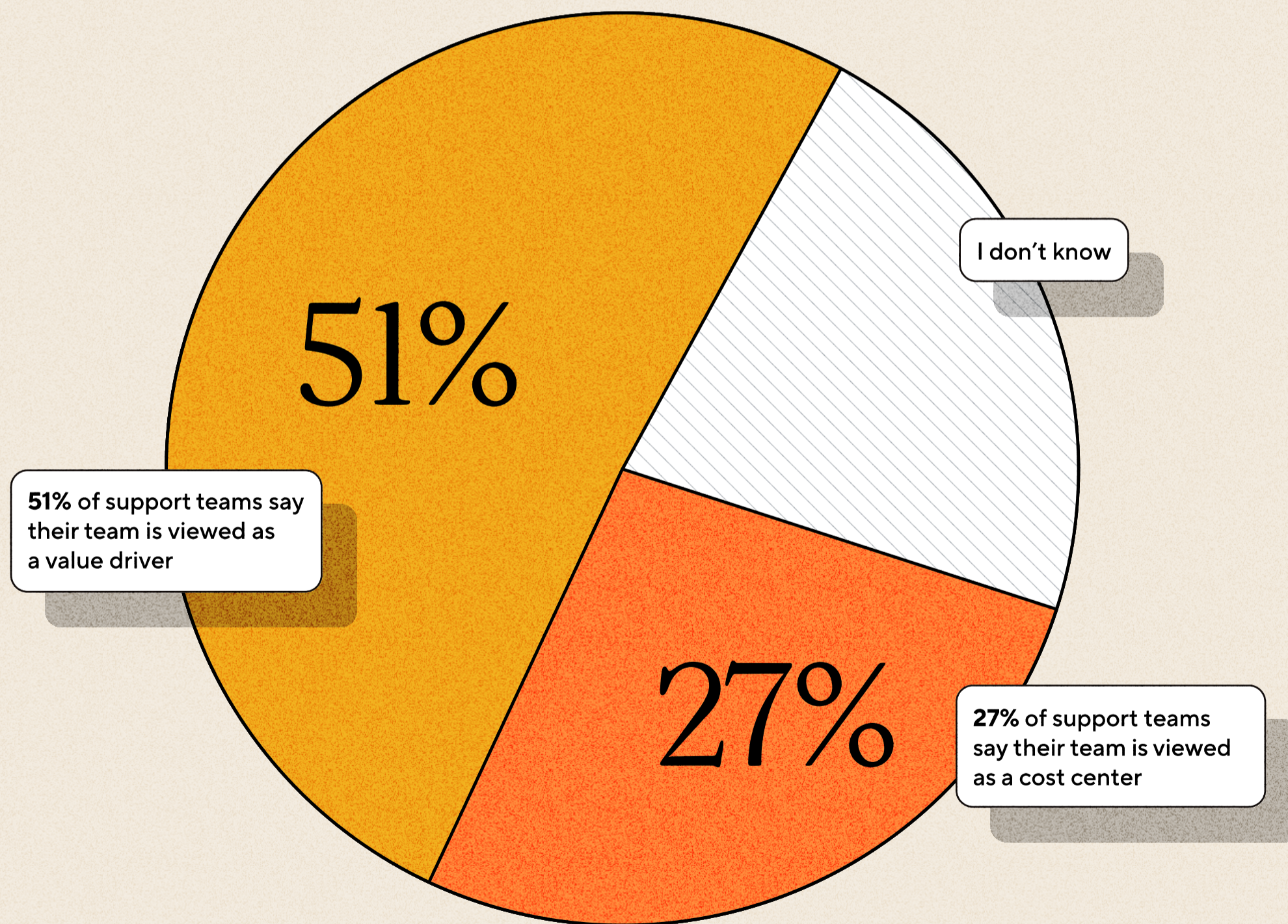
This makes sense: after all, it’s part of a C-level's job to look beyond today and see what’s possible tomorrow, while agents are typically more focused on day-to-day activities. But it does signal a need for forward-thinking leaders to communicate the opportunities and upcoming pathways to their teams so that reps feel included, excited, empowered – and can plan a long-term future with your company.



This ties in to another big question around the role – or rather, the perception – of customer service within the wider business. **Over half of support teams say their company views them as a value driver**, versus 27% who say their team is viewed as a cost center. But again, the breakdown reveals a discrepancy between leadership and agents, with the latter less likely to report being perceived as a value driver.

As AI transforms the customer service landscape and unlocks impactful new opportunities for your support reps, we anticipate this gap will close – and **the true value customer service brings to the business will be fully recognized.**

Is your support team viewed as a value driver or a cost center?



Micro-trend

Know your worth

A worrying 37% of C-level support executives and 35% of support leaders say their company sees them as a cost center. This highlights the need to communicate the value customer service brings to the business as a whole with other C-level leaders and stakeholders. Linking your customer service efforts back to company goals and strategies can help, as can regularly sharing metrics updates – see Trend 5 for more.

⚡ Take action

Future-proof and empower your support team by helping them grow into new roles

Want to set your team (or yourself) up for success? Here's a breakdown of some of the upcoming support roles we anticipate, as well as the skills and activities support reps can practice now to thrive later.

Role

Chatbot analyst

What they do

Analyze chatbot performance and customer conversation data to uncover insights and find new opportunities.

Key responsibilities

- Analyzing and interpreting chatbot data.
- Understanding how and why AI chatbots work the way they do.
- Reporting on chatbot performance.
- Collaborating across teams to identify opportunities and priorities.

How to start

- Dig in to your AI bot reports to discuss insights and suggest action points.
- Dedicate time each week to investigate data and identify patterns.
- Learn about the core technologies behind AI chatbots, natural language processing (NLP) and large language models (LLMs).
- Practice reporting on these insights and look for opportunities to share your findings with other teams.

Conversation designer

Optimize the end-to-end support experience for your customers using a combination of AI bots, automation, and human support.

- Mapping the user experience.
- Collecting and interpreting customer feedback.
- Creating and optimizing workflows.

- Study customer journey mapping and the UX principles needed to do it effectively.
- Regularly review customer feedback to spot patterns and find areas to improve.
- Run workshops with your support team to understand pain points or weaknesses in their current workflow.
- Suggest and trial new workflows and conversation paths and report on their success.

Knowledge manager

Create high-quality support content to fuel your AI bots, as well as internal content for your customer service team to use, and review and optimize how that content gets used.

- Identifying gaps in your knowledge base.
- Creating and updating help center articles and other content.
- Managing and optimizing your help center.
- Analyzing bot metrics to understand content performance.

- Track the questions your bot wasn't able to answer to identify gaps in your existing knowledge base.
- Regularly update your help center content as you launch new features.
- Carve out time to write or update new content each week.
- Dig into content and bot analytics to see which resources are most helpful to customers, then apply these learnings to new content.

Trend 04

Ditch the dated tech:
Old tools are holding support teams back, and they're reevaluating their tech stacks for 2024

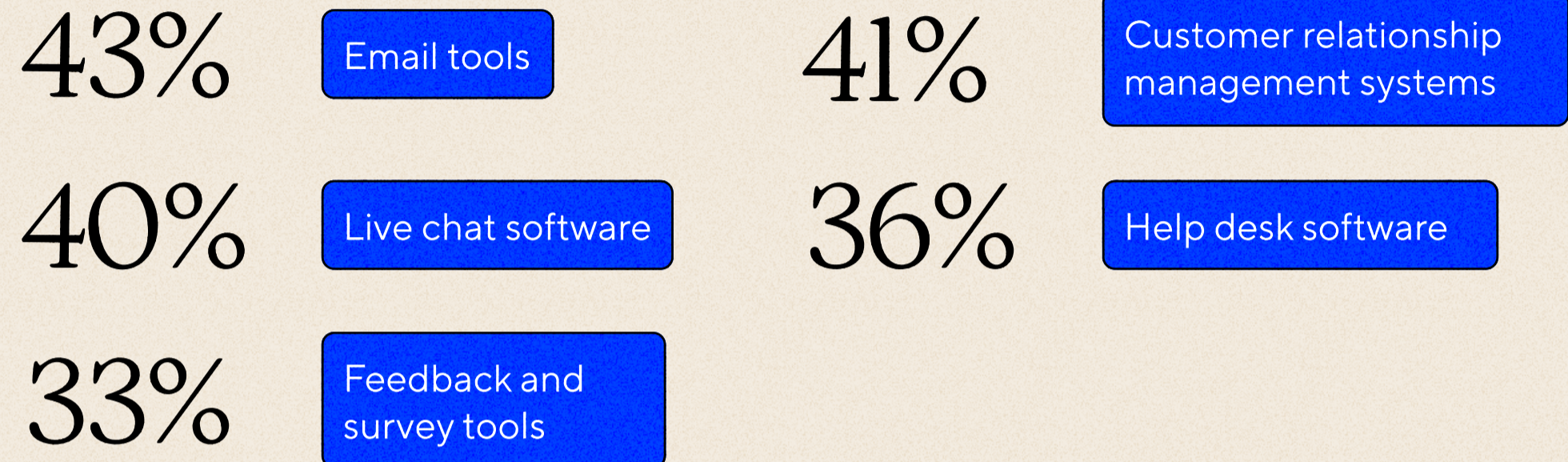
Despite monumental shifts in customer service technology thanks to AI, our research suggests that many support teams are still weighed down by a mish-mash of old tools.

Support teams report using a combination of tools of the trade, but **there's a disconnect between what they're using and what they say works best for them** – and their customers.

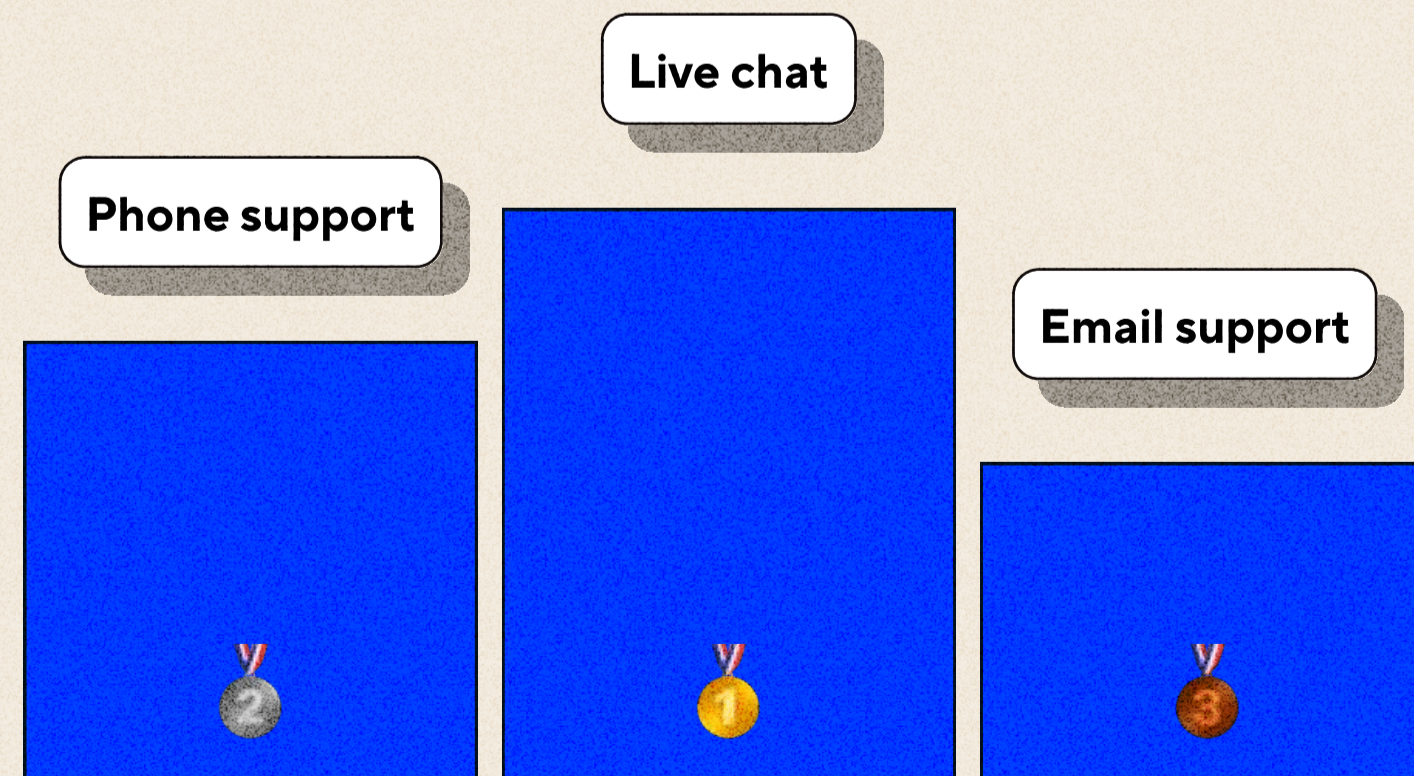
Each of these “traditional” tools has strengths and weaknesses:

- Email allows for asynchronous conversations, but it's slow and time-consuming to craft responses.
- Customer relationship management (CRM) systems capture customer data, but can be costly and complex to implement.
- Phone support allows for instantaneous back-and-forth communication, but its effectiveness is limited by its lack of scalability.

Support teams' most used tools



...and the most effective channels, according to support leaders



18%

18% of support teams said that the tools they use can fully support their needs all of the time

76%

76% of C-level support execs said they're always looking for new platforms, tools, and technologies

65%

65% of support execs and leaders are specifically looking at new platforms or tools as a result of AI

As a result, less than a fifth of respondents (18%) say that the tools they use can fully support their needs all of the time. Maybe that's why 76% of C-level support execs are always looking for new platforms, tools, and technologies – and 65% are **looking at new platforms specifically as a result of AI.**

As we've seen, AI has already changed the customer service game. For forward-thinking support leaders, it's not enough to bolt AI onto an already outdated tech stack and hope for the best. **An AI-first world requires an AI-first approach**, which will make it critical to have a customer service platform with AI at its core. This will not only enable support teams to provide contextual and personalized support at scale but also fully embrace a human + AI future – and all the benefits that come with it.

A modern, AI-powered customer service platform combines the best of all worlds by:

Being channel agnostic, so you can meet customers in their preferred channel (all from one centralized place behind the scenes).

Enabling seamless integration of customer data, so you can provide personalized experiences that build loyalty.

Enhancing workflows with leading edge automation, to streamline processes and boost efficiency.

Leveraging your knowledge base and providing content management capabilities that help you get the most from your resources.

“We had previously been using Zendesk for inbound tickets, Appcues for outbound in-app customer engagement, and Iterable for customer life-cycle outbound communication (email & push). Intercom allowed us to consolidate our tech stack and bring all of these communication channels into one system. This has saved our team a ton of time and has provided better visibility to both inbound tickets and automated outbound engagements.”

John Wisnieski

Customer Success Operations Manager at ArcSite

C-level support execs' reasons for looking for new platforms, tools, or technologies

Cost

35%

Data security concerns

32%

Platform downtime

29%

Lack of real-time insights

28%

Integration complexity

28%

In addition to the AI revolution, there are a number of other factors that cause support leadership to look for new tools. C-level execs are focused on big-picture concerns – like cost, data security, and stability – while 29% of support leaders are especially frustrated by limited customization.

Micro-trend

The importance of customization

To provide a consistent, reliable customer experience that builds trust and loyalty, your customer service channels should be an extension of the rest of your brand. Look for platforms that enable you to customize the look and feel of your AI chatbot and live chat messenger – think: colors, logo, and tone of voice – to reassure your customers that they're in safe hands.

But despite all these push factors for support leaders to adopt new tools, there are challenges when implementing new technologies, too. Each role has unique obstacles: C-level execs reported resistance to change as their biggest struggle, while support leaders – the people tasked with rolling out the implementation and ensuring a smooth transition – cited cost, resistance to change, and the issue of data migration complexity.

For support agents, disruption of workflows (30%) and insufficient training and onboarding (23%) were mentioned as major challenges. These issues don't just affect your team; they affect your customers as well – so it's doubly important to provide adequate training and support for any new tool to ensure things go as smoothly as possible.

The biggest obstacles when implementing new technologies

C-level support execs

Resistance to change

39%

Cost and budget constraints

36%

Insufficient training and onboarding

30%

Disruption of workflows

28%

Support leaders

Cost and budget constraints

34%

Resistance to change

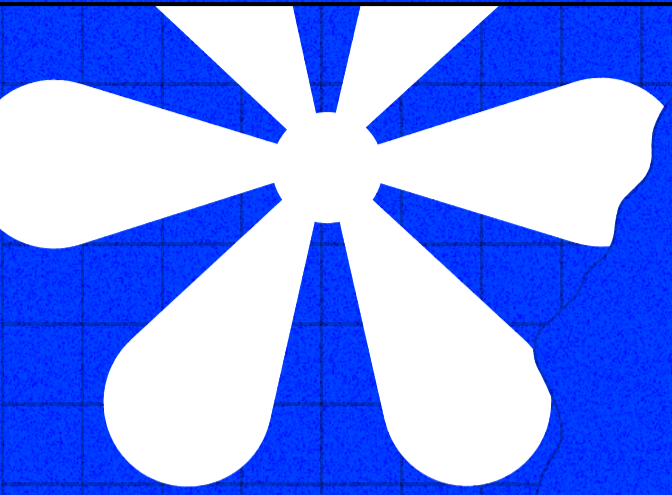
29%

Data migration complexity

24%

Disruption of workflows

23%

**⚡ Take action**

Get buy-in for new tools by addressing the common obstacles



1

Overcome resistance to change

- Share the reasons for the change with the wider team, so people understand the logic behind it.
- Highlight how the new tool will address the team's existing pain points and improve their everyday work (be specific!).
- Take questions and address feedback to keep an open line of communication with your team and alleviate any anxieties. You could do this in a company or team meeting, or create a dedicated Slack channel for ongoing updates.

2

Make implementation easier

- Do a full evaluation of the new tool to make sure it meets your needs. Consider factors like integrations with your existing tech stack, ease of data migration, and security certifications.
- Make a detailed plan for the transition. Consider which workflows need to be transferred to your new tool, which ones should be updated, and identify what resources you'll need to make the switch.
- Get excited about the untapped opportunities an innovative new tool brings. Where can you optimize existing workflows with AI and incorporate bots to create better customer experiences?

3

Minimize disruption

- Consider the timing for the change. For example, don't plan to switch to a new customer service platform during the holiday season or just as you launch a new product or feature. Look at your historical data to identify trends – are there any quiet periods you can take advantage of?
- Provide in-depth training on how to use your new tool to prepare support reps for the change. In addition to dedicated training sessions, look for a platform with lots of help resources to support your team even further.
- Keep track of commonly asked questions and create internal documentation to help guide reps through these FAQs.

Trend 05

Metrics reloaded:
Success looks different in an AI-first world, and teams need to redefine the way they measure value

As customer service increasingly shifts towards AI-first ways of working, leaders will need to find new ways to measure their success and ensure they're equipped for the future.

Our survey revealed that support teams rely on a few key ways of measuring the customer experience, such as customer satisfaction (CSAT) score, online feedback, and customer follow-ups.

Being able to measure and report on your customers' experience is crucial. It helps you stay close to them, understand their needs, and drive continuous improvement across your support organization. Not only that, but it also helps support leaders and teams connect their work to tangible outcomes and business results, highlighting how customer service really is a value driver, not a cost center, for your business.

How support teams currently measure the customer experience

Customer satisfaction (CSAT) score

44%

Feedback forms

38%

Online reviews and ratings

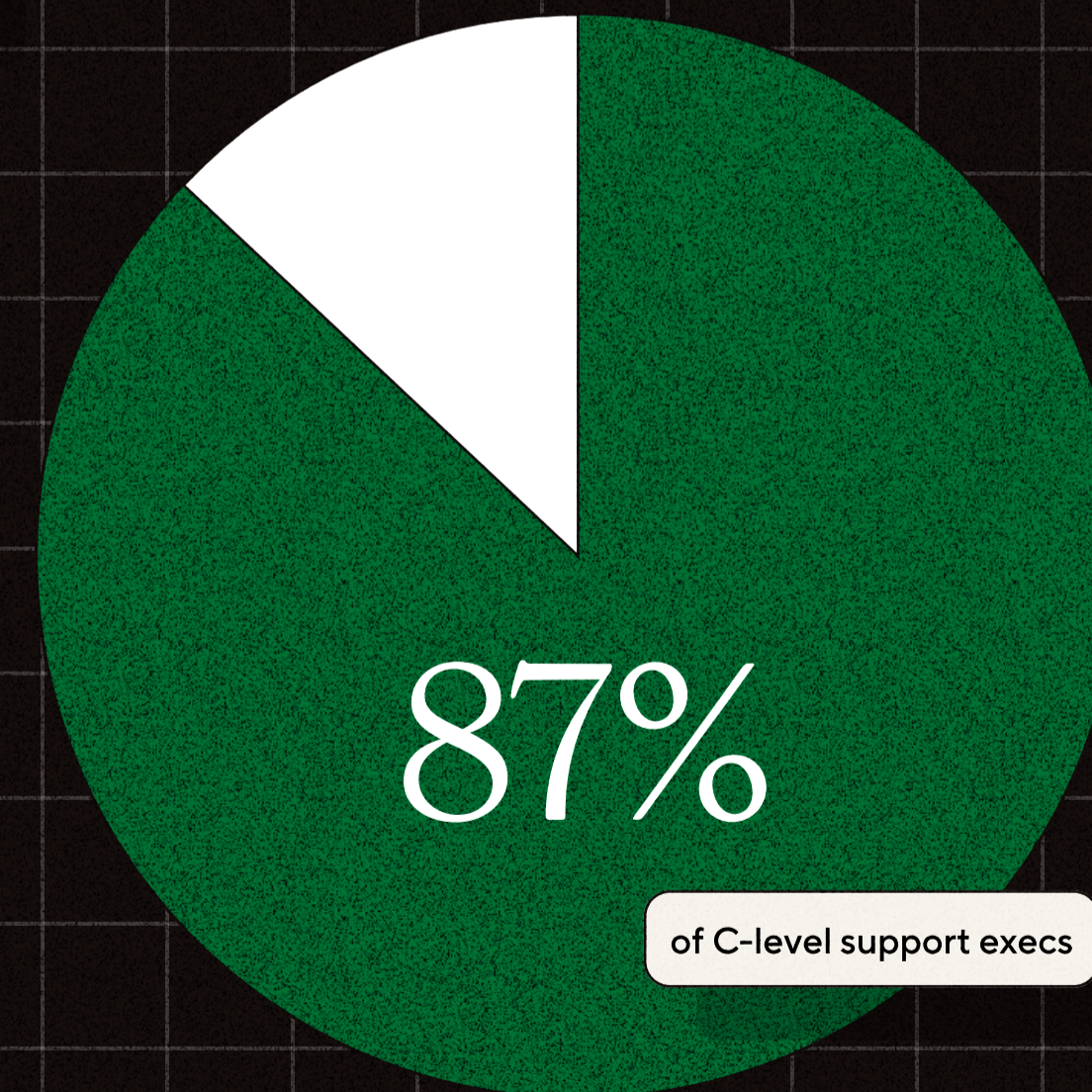
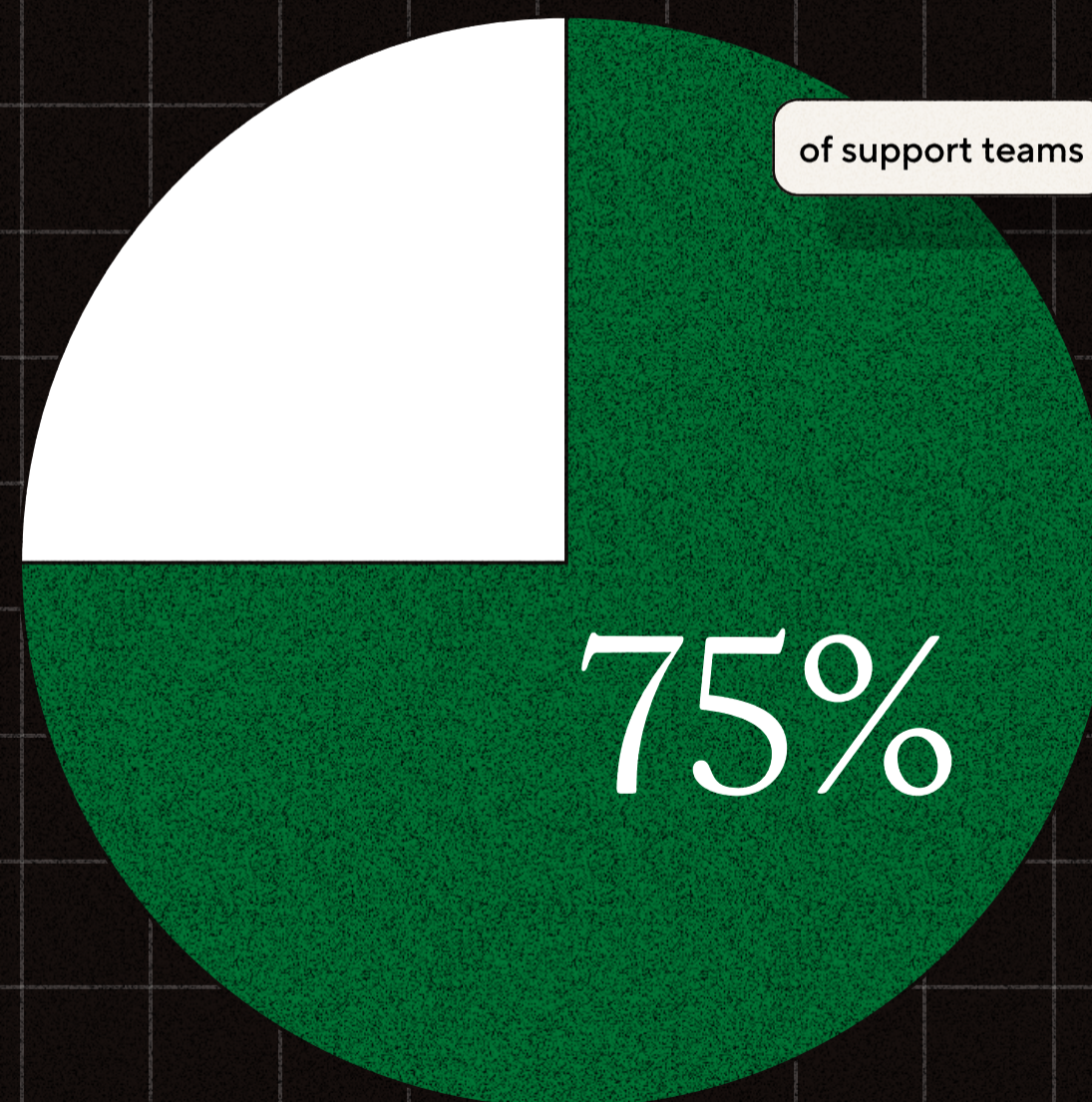
30%

Follow-up calls or emails

30%

The percentage of respondents who said customer service metrics are changing as a result of recent developments in AI

However, a quarter of support teams cannot say their current tools enable them to track the metrics that they need to. And with 75% of support teams (and even more of our executive cohort) saying that **traditional customer service metrics are changing as a result of recent developments in AI**, it begs the question: can old-school, disconnected tech stacks measure value in a new world?



The number one metric teams believe will change is CSAT. As an overall indicator of customer happiness, CSAT is often the Holy Grail metric for support teams. Now, with AI supporting every part of the customer service interaction, **there are more opportunities than ever for your team to delight your customers and provide the exact level of support they need.**

Consequently, those ever-rising customer expectations will only get higher. But be warned: poorly executed AI experiences (like hallucinations) also risk tanking your CSAT score, so it's important to monitor this metric carefully and make adjustments as needed.

AI is also set to revolutionize time-based metrics, accelerating everything from time to resolution (TTR) to average handle time (AHT) to first response time (FRT) with its instant answers and behind-the-scenes efficiency gains.

This is where the need to **evolve your metrics to meet AI-first ways of working** comes in. Without a nuanced understanding of your team's (and bot's) performance, you risk skewing your data and overlooking major insights – and opportunities.

But with the right metrics framework (and the right platform to help you find and leverage them), you can:

- Pinpoint exactly which parts of the customer service experience need to change or can be improved, even in real time.
- Identify where in the user journey bots are most efficient versus where humans work best.
- Iterate and optimize your customer service based on actionable insights surfaced by AI.

The metrics most likely to change as a result of AI, according to support teams

CSAT

38%

Time to resolution

31%

Average handle time

30%

First response time

29%

“The richness of information and insights that Intercom is able to provide, and the ease with which we are able to get to those insights, is Intercom’s secret sauce.”

Gregor Hartnell

Head of Customer Experience at RateMyAgent

⚡ Take action

How fundamental customer service metrics are changing – and what to do about it

No customer service metric is an island. Instead, think of them like an archipelago: a connected cluster of data points that all work together within the same ecosystem.

Let's go island hopping.

Metric

Customer satisfaction (CSAT)

Time to resolution (TTR)

Average handle time (AHT)

First response time (FRT)

Rate of automated resolution (ROAR)

Customer effort score (CES)

What it tells you

How happy your customers are with their customer service experience

The average time it takes to fully resolve a customer query

The average time your team spends working on customer conversations.

The time it takes to send an initial response to a customer query

The number of queries that are entirely resolved by automation and bots

How much effort a customer has to make in order to resolve their issue

What to consider now

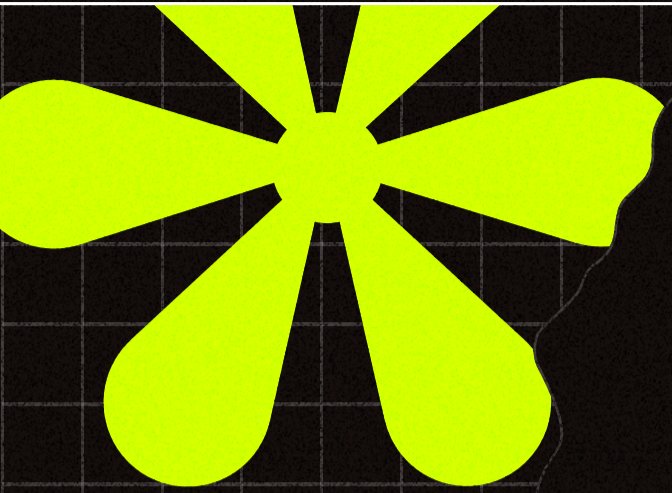
- How does CSAT compare between bots and humans?
- Are customers less inclined to rate their interactions with bots?

- How does TTR and AHT vary between bots and humans?
- Which types of conversations take longer to handle/resolve and why?
- What resources or workflow optimizations could you deploy to speed up these processes?

- How does FRT affect other metrics, like CSAT?
- How successful are your bots at triaging queries?

- What percentage of your support volume is being completely resolved with no human intervention – and how much time is that freeing up for your support team?
- How can you reinvest these time savings into activities that further improve the customer experience or upskill support reps?

- Are your AI bots reducing customer effort (they should be!) or are there any issues causing frustration?

Take action

How fundamental customer service metrics are changing – and what to do about it



1

Get granular

Split out key reports (like CSAT, TTR, and AHT) into “bots” and “humans” so you can drill down and get an accurate read on overall performance.

2

Consider in context

Remember that with AI resolving simpler issues, your team will be left with the more complicated ones – so their handling and resolution times will likely increase. Consider these metrics alongside CSAT scores for a more holistic view.

3

Iterate and optimize

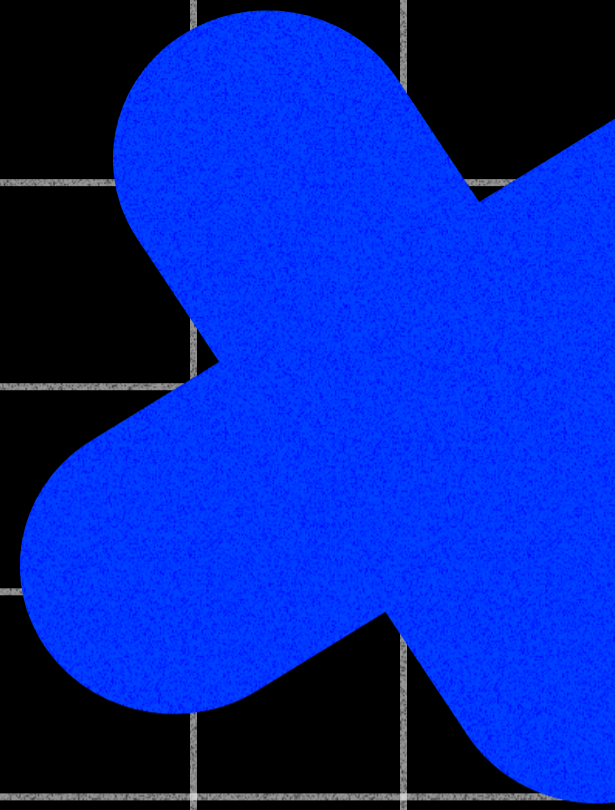
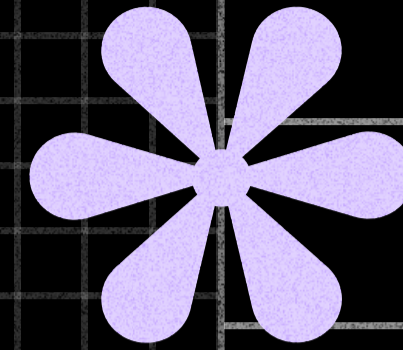
Regularly analyze your metrics to find new ways to improve. For example: which area has the lowest customer satisfaction ratings and why? Are there any common patterns? What can you do differently? Maybe you can create a new piece of help content for your AI bot to share, or use automation to route tricky issues to the right members of your team for expert input, faster.

4

Share your wins

Don't forget to report on the overall return on investment of your AI efforts (like time saved, increase in conversations managed, and overall boost in customer happiness) to the wider business to highlight your team's increased strategic impact.

Customer service is undergoing radical change. Are you ready to embrace it?



AI-powered customer service has already changed the support game for good (double meaning intended). The support teams embracing this technology are enjoying the benefits of happier customers, more productive teams, and better KPIs.

At Intercom, we're all-in on service AI – and we're leading this transformation. We're ahead of the competition, and we're here to help you get ahead of yours, too.

Our complete customer service platform is the only solution that combines an AI chatbot, help desk, and proactive support tools to help you maximize productivity and deliver personalized support at scale.

Want to see for yourself? Try Intercom today to unlock the power of AI for customer service.

Start a free trial